

**Attn: Legislature**

Hi! My name is Billie

I wanted to be able to write a really great speech for you this evening, concerning Medicaid and a \$5 co-payment for some services. I wanted to be able to write something that would really touch you and bring attention to the plight of many people in the same circumstance as myself. But I suffer from anxiety and panic attacks, and every time I thought about what I might say to you this evening, I would get sick. So I want to apologize for not being as prepared as I could have been.

I guess this would be a good time to thank you for not yet cutting Columbia River Mental Health Services. Without them I would not be able to be here this evening. Please excuse me if I become emotional or start to shake through this.

I would like to tell you a brief history about myself and why I am here tonight sharing my story with you. First I want to make it very clear to you that I am here by circumstance and not by choice. What has happened to me, could of very easily have happened to any of you. It seems almost impossible to sum up the last 10 years of hell, pain, and suffering all in a matter of minutes, but I will give it my best shot!

My name is Billie J. Reed. I am 44 years of age. I have been sick and on Social Security Disability and Supplemental Security Income for over 11 years.

On September of 1990, I had an ovarian cyst perforate. At the time I was living on Catalina Island in Cal. I was life flighted to a County Hospital over on the mainland. I had a procedure done that left me with a bacterial infection in my pelvis, which went misdiagnosed for almost 7 years. Through these years, I went through many bouts of antibiotics. This Bacteria called Klebsiella Pneumonia, was not discovered until it had moved into my bladder. This also went misdiagnosed, leaving me with a bladder infection for over two years. Since then I have had to be on antibiotic therapy for an additional

2 years, only to be off of them for the last 6 months. The scar tissue left by the bacteria keeps me on a high scale of pain. And I now have Mental Health issues.

Through all this Medical nightmare, I lived off of \$329.00 a month from DSHS, and \$50.00 or so Dollars in food stamps, waiting for my Social Security Disability. I was living with my sister at this time who graciously helped with the remainder of my up keep. I am sure I was more fortunate than some to have family to help me.

It took me over 5 years and 2 lawyers and \$6,400.00 of Social Security back pay to acquire my Social Security Disability and Subsidized Housing. And I am sad to say my sister is no longer able to help with my up keep, due to her own medical needs.

My total monthly income is approximately \$566.00. This is a little over \$6,000 a year. After Rent, Electric, Water/Sewer, Telephone, Car Insurance and Cable that leaves me about \$150.00 to try and struggle to buy Food, Gas, Toiletries and over the counter medications, not to mention Shoes, and Clothing.

I am on assistance because I am sick!

This is where I need to stress to you that there is nothing left over on the assistance that you give me for anything. There is not even enough to make it through the month. The stress on how to make ends meet when you are physically unable to meet that challenge is very overwhelming.

I keep hearing you say over and over how Washington State has to make all these budget cuts. Excuse me if my information is incorrect. My source is the Columbian Newspaper. I have read many articles on how we have Millions of Dollars for transportation projects depending on the passage of Referendum 51. These projects total more than \$367 Million Dollars, not to mention transportation mega-projects totaling over \$20 Billion Dollars. You have also found \$100 Million to upgrade the State Capital. And the City of Vancouver has managed itself into making a contribution, and is paying the additional \$120,000 over the life of the mortgage for the Special Events Center project if approved. Also the Million Dollar facility that opened up in Seattle for Gays and Lesbians.

The point I am trying to make here, is that there is obviously a huge Washington budget. I urge you to take a second look on how this budget is spent. I am sorry I do not have all the statistics, but I am sure there are many people as needy as myself.

Please understand you need to make a realistic plan for peoples lives

that are on disability and less than adequate incomes. You need to be realistic in your decision making, and take into account that these Social Services are life and death to a lot of people in my situation.

You say you are considering a \$5 co-payment for some medical services. I am here this evening to tell you that I do not have the additional \$5. And because I do not have an additional \$5 means I do not have these so called medical choices. Again I urge you to take a second look at the Disabled and the inadequate lifestyles you have incurred upon them.

At this time I would also like to say that it is against the Federal law for any Creditor to take your Social Security Retirement and Disability back pay. Can anyone in this room explain to me why Washington State took mine and gave it to Collectors?

I just want to add here how saddened I was by an article in this mornings Columbian. It talks about how the State is cutting or reducing Supplemental Security Income aid to over \$100,000 elderly, blind and disabled.

It just seems to me that are priorities in Washington State are not in order.

The best analogy I can give here is that you have put me adrift in a boat with not enough supplies to reach land and now you are shooting holes in my boat. There is no where for me to go, except to drown. I beg of you to not let this happen.

Thank you for your time!

Billie